**EK School Council**

**MINUTES**

Tuesday, September 22, 2015

Meeting start: 7:00pm Adjourned:

In Attendance: Jo-Ann A., Jenny B., Richelle B., Cara C., Heather Cl., Jen C., Natacha d., Danielle D., Kate F., Yo G., Christi H., Fiona K., Mirna L., Jason M., Jennifer M., Hannah M., Kelly M., Nancy N., Anne P., Laura R., Allison S., Laura V., Jennifer W., Michelle W., Gay Y.

1. **Welcome**
2. **2014-15 School Council AGM**
3. **Annual Report**
4. **By-law Vote**
5. **Presentation from PIC Member, Susan Millman**
6. **Elections for School Council Membership**
7. **Elections of Executive positions (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary)**
8. **Principal’s Report**
9. **Staff Report**
10. **School Council New Business**
11. Parking around the school
12. Playground Committee, spending of PBAC funds
13. PRO Grant
14. Monthly meeting dates for 2014-15
15. **Notices/Reminders:**

* School Board Public Consultation
  + Draft Pupil Accommodation Review and Community Planning and Facility Partnership Policy Consultations, deadline Friday, October 16th at 4:00 pm

**Attachments included:**

* School Council Annual Report
* By-law Summary of Proposed Changes
* School Council Membership 2014-15

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**2014-2015**

In 2014-15 School Council and Home & School continued to meet jointly on the second Tuesday of each month. Unusually long SC agendas made alternating meeting times more difficult than in the past, and it is hoped that a better balance can be achieved in the coming year. Ten meetings were held.

**Accomplishments**

Entry & Dismissal Procedures: Congestion on the playground and safe entry and dismissal were identified early in the year as issues that needed School Council’s attention. Principal Bratuz had playground assessments done by fire and police officials and used the information to formulate new procedures. The changes were met with a wide-range of opinions which were brought forward by Council members, parents and guardians. School Council fielded challenging criticisms, yet provided opportunities for discussion and suggestions. Throughout the process, School Council maintained its ability to work as a unit, achieve other goals, and support the excellent work done by the 100th Anniversary Committee.

Playground Renewal: In the spring of 2014, Earl Kitchener School Council members submitted proposals to the Participatory Budget funding process for Ward 1 and were successful in receiving $50,000 to “revitalize/naturalize playground and repave tarmac.” In 2014-15, a Playground Sub-Committee was formed and began initial discussions on how to proceed. While other playground matters delayed the progress somewhat, important steps were taken: gaining an understanding of responsibilities (Board and City), identification of potential focus areas, and improvements already being planned (dead tree removal). Moving this project forward to completion during the 2015-16 year will be a top priority for the Committee and new School Council.

PRO Grant Funding: In Spring 2015 two parts of our “Thriving Through Transitions” program were implemented. The New to Kindergarten and Grade 5 to Middle School evenings were well attended and deemed to be extremely successful. Unfortunately the Senior Kindergarten to Grade 1 evening could not go ahead as scheduled. Based on the feedback from the teachers involved, Council decided to submit the same project for another PRO Grant in 2015-16. Happily, we have again been awarded $1,000 from the Ministry of Education’s Parent Reaching Out Grant, and look forward to having three successful transition events in the spring of 2016. The goal of all sessions is to increase engagement and communication with parents.

By-law Review: The Earl Kitchener School Council Constitution and By-laws should be reviewed annually. This year, the highlights are new sections on Confidentiality and Conflict Resolution, substituting the word “guardian” for “parent” to be more inclusive, and striking all references to removing members from Council. As required by the By-laws, the updated version will be presented for approval at this AGM.

**Recommendations to the New Council**

Parent Information Evening: This event is traditionally held between February and April, depending on the purpose and the school schedule. The evening provides an excellent opportunity to engage parents in topics that are relevant to them and their children. It also offers a way for School Council to demonstrate its presence and value in a tangible way. In 2014-15, SC chose not to host a PIE in light of the energy focused on EK’s 100th anniversary. Often the PIE includes a Camp Fair to help parents identify summer camp opportunities in the community. The last Camp Fair was held March 4, 2014.

Parking: The lack of parking around EK, and the illegal parking that results is dangerous and of great concern. This has been an ongoing point of discussion at School Council meetings, and solutions should continue to be explored, evaluated, and implemented in the coming year.

PRO Grant: Notes and receipts should be kept for the series of three events to aid in completing the report. The PRO Grant proposal and guidelines for 2016-17 will be available in the spring. SC should discuss ideas in advance and apply for funding. This year the deadline was mid-May.

**Thank You**

I wish to express my appreciation to all the members of the 2014-2015 School Council who gave generously of their time to attend meetings, serve on sub-committees, and assist with events. It was truly a challenging year to be on Council, and while our opinions varied greatly, everyone kept showing up, kept discussing, and kept working toward the goal of creating a welcoming and inspiring school for our children. The most memorable moment of the past year will be the 100th Anniversary – a celebration that took commitment, teamwork, resources, creativity, and caring.

Sincere thanks to Jennifer Matthews and Nancy Niessen who shared their perspectives, worked to ensure successful transition evenings, and gracefully endured difficult Council meetings. Many thanks to Richelle Bratuz who always put students first and ensured Council was informed on issues affecting EK. All of you, and many other staff, were integral to the success of the 100th Anniversary.

Thanks to Hannah McIntosh, Vice-Chair of School Council, and Allison Savage, Secretary, for their assistance throughout the year. To the members of Home & School, co-chaired by Cathy Koop and Kerry Turcotte, thank you for understanding when Council meetings ran overtime repeatedly and for recruiting untold numbers of volunteers to deliver incredible programs that make EK truly great.

Good luck and best wishes to the 2015-2016 School Council.

Warm regards,

Jennifer Walsom

Chair, School Council

**September 22, 2015**

**Summary of Proposed Changes to the**

**Earl Kitchener School Council Constitution and By-Laws**

**Inclusive Language**: Changed the word “parent” to “guardian” to include all adults who are legal guardians of EK students. The definition is provided in Article I, Definitions (f).

**Section 2.02 Terms of Office**

Change point “c” to clarify that the Vice Chair may become Chair, and the Chair can become Vice Chair.

**Section 2.03 Election of Guardian Representatives**

Amend point “d” to have the secret ballot vote take place during the AGM. The ballots will be counted by the Principal, a past member of Council, and if possible, a guardian who is not standing for election.

**Section 2.04 Executive and Other Positions**

Under (a) Executive Positions, point (1), add that the Chair position must be held by a member of the previous year’s Council.

**Section 2.05 Duties and Responsibilities of School Council Members**

1. Attend School Council Meetings
2. At a minimum, it is expected that School Council Members will not miss more than 3 meetings or 50% of the total number of meetings in the school year, whichever is the lesser.

**Section 2.06 Resignation and Removal of School Council Members**

The “Removal” section is entirely rewritten, since the Education Act’s regulations for School Councils make no provision for the discretionary removal of an elected or appointed School Council member. The section notes that it is important for members to attend all meetings to ensure that quorum is always reached. If a member fails to attend meetings on a regular basis, the Chair and/or Vice Chair may choose to discuss the situation with the member.

**Section 3.04 Resolutions**

Combined points “e” and “f” regarding the two-thirds majority required for both General and Special Resolutions. Also removed point “i” regarding Conflict Resolution since this is now in a separate section.

**Section 3.06 Conflict of Interest**

In the “Failure to Comply with Duty” section, removed points 1 and 2 which spoke to terminating a person’s membership in Council.

**Section 3.07 Minutes of Meetings and Recording Decisions**

In point “c” regarding distribution of minutes, added that approved minutes would be posted to the EK website. Reordered the points, so that distributing minutes to School Council members appears first.

**Article V. Confidentiality \*New Section**

Speaks to the commitment of School Council to protect the privacy of personal information.

**Article VI. Conflict Resolution \*New Section**

Conflict can be either a positive or negative force. When approached with respect and the common goal of a successful outcome, conflict can result in creative solutions, bring clarity to an issue, increase involvement of members, and strengthen relationships. However, it can also divert energy, compromise morale, obstruct progress, and create distrust.

Guidelines for handling conflict in a respectful and collaborative manner are provided under the following framework, with procedures included.

1. *Acknowledge and define the conflict.*
2. *Plan how to deal with the conflict.*
3. *Provide time for discussion*.
4. *Seek resolution.*

**Earl Kitchener School Council**

**2015-2016 Membership**

Chair: Allison Savage

Vice-Chair: Christi Hodgson

Secretary:

Principal: Richelle Bratuz

Members:

Cara Carrothers

Heather Clark

Jen Currie

Natacha da Silva

Danielle Dutchak-Nunn

Kate Feightner

Yo Gerrard

Christi Hodgson

Fiona Kouyoumdjian

Mirna Lopez

Jason McGee

Hannah McIntosh

Kelly Mendonca

Anne Prat Kalonji

Laura Rudolph

Allison Savage

Laura Van Alphen

Jennifer Walsom

Michelle Woods

Jennifer Matthews, Teaching Staff Representative

B., Community Representative